

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 4770

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR PINT PINS LE IS UN
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: DISCUSSION WITH GOL FOREIGN MINISTER

1. IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE ON LEAVE AUGUST 17, I CALLED ON BOUTROS TO REVIEW THE SITUATION IN SOUTH. DCM KINSOLVING ALSO PRESENT. BOUTROS INDICATED THAT HE WAS NOT HAPPY WITH THE MOST RECENT PLAN TO MOVE THE LEBANESE BATTALION BY HELICOPTER TO AN ALTERNATE SITE. HE SEEMED TO THINK IT WAS AN ISRAELI IDEA. I TOLD HIM WE HAD IMPRESSION IDEA OF AN ALTERNATE SITE HAD COME FROM THE UN, AND POINTED OUT THAT SINCE WHAT IS WANTED IS A SYMBOLIC PRESENCE SOUTH OF THE LITANI, PERHAPS IT DID NOT MAKE TOO MUCH DIFFERENCE EXACTLY WHICH LOCATION IT IS IN. THE OBJECTIVE OF LOCATION NEAR SRIFA WOULD BE TO REDUCE THE CHANCES OF BEING SHELLED BY THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. IN RESPONSE TO BOUTROS' QUESTION, I CONFIRMED THAT IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING ISRAELIS HAD AGREED TO UN PROPOSAL

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FOR AN ALTERNATE SITE. HE ASKED IF THE NEW SITE WAS SAFE FROM CHRISTIAN SHELLING. I SAID IT WAS MUCH SAFER THAN TIBNIN, BEING MORE REMOTE, BUT ERSKINE TOLD US IT WAS STILL WITHIN MAXIMUM RANGE OF CHRISTIAN ARTILLERY.

2. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THREE QUESTIONS EMERGED:

(A) IS THERE DEFINITE AGREEMENT FROM THE ISRAELIS ON THE PROPOSAL FOR AN ALTERNATE SITE?

(B) IS THE ALTERNATE SITE SAFE?

(C) DO THE ISRAELIS GUARANTEE THE SAFETY OF THE LEBANESE UNIT AT THAT SITE?

3. I UNDERTOOK TO GET A COMMENT FROM AMBASSADOR LEWIS ON QUESTIONS (A) AND (B) BUT SAID THAT ANSWER TO (C) WAS CLEAR; ISRAELIS WOULD NOT GUARANTEE ANYTHING RE CHRISTIANS. THERE WAS NO GUARANTEE THAT UNIFIL OR THE LAF OR ANYONE ELSE IN THIS AREA WILL NOT BE SHELLED.

4. I NOTED THAT WE HAD REPORTED THAT THE GOL IS UNDER PRESSURE TO COURT-MARTIAL HADDAD. AMBASSADOR LEWIS HAD STRONGLY ADVISED THAT GOL NOT DO THIS JUST BEFORE OR AS IT DEPLOYS LEBANESE TROOPS IN THE SOUTH. HADDAD IS ERRATIC AND THIS ACTION WOULD MAKE HIM START SHOOTING AGAIN. I THEN TOLD BOUTROS THAT THE ISRAELIS ONLY APPEAR TO HAVE ABOUT 75 PER CENT CONTROL OVER HADDAD AND THAT HADDAD IN TURN DOES NOT HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OVER THOSE UNDER HIM. BOUTROS COMMENTED THAT HADDAD DEPENDS ON ISRAEL ABOUT 75 PER CENT AND THE ISRAELIS AGREED TO GIVE HIM 25 PER CENT FREEDOM OF ACTION, SO HE CAN USE IT FOR ISRAELI POLICY OBJECTIVES.

5. I NOTED THAT WASHINGTON IS CONCERNED ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION AND SECRET

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RENEWAL OF THE UNIFIL MANDATE. UNIFIL HAS ACCOMPLISHED MUCH OF ITS TASK RELATING TO PALESTINIANS, BUT IS NOW UP AGAINST THE ISRAELI ASPECT. SOLVING THAT WILL TAKE TIME. MEANWHILE UNIFIL HAS ACCOMPLISHED A GOOD DEAL. BOUTROS REPLIED THAT THE GOL HAS PROVED ITS GOOD INTENTIONS BY ATTEMPTING TO SEND THE LAF TO THE SOUTH. GOL IS NOW CONSIDERING SENDING A MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL EXPLAINING THE SITUATION IN WHICH IT FINDS ITSELF, WITHOUT ASKING FOR A SC MEETING. THE OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO GET THE UNSYG TO MAKE A REPORT. (HE NOTED URQUHART'S IMPENDING ARRIVAL.) HE COMMENTED THAT HE IS BEING SUBJECTED TO GREAT SYRIAN PRESSURE ON THE ISSUE OF MOVING TO THE SOUTH, AND THAT THE PRESSURE MAY BE ADDED TO BY THE MUSLIM MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT. ON AUGUST 22 THERE WILL BE A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT WHICH THERE WILL BE RENEWED DEMANDS TO SEND THE ARMY SOUTH "BY FORCE". I SUGGESTED HE PUT THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE IN THE LEAD TRUCK AND LET THEM SET THE PACE. PARKER

SECRET

NNN

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